THE VANITIE OF THOUGHTS DISCOVERED: WITH THEIR DANGER AND CVRE.

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THE VANITIE OF THOUGHTS.

JEREM. 4. 14.

How long ſhall thy vaine Thoughts lodge within thee?

IN theſe words he compares the *Heart* unto ſome houſe of common reſort, made as it were with many and large roomes to entertaine and lodge multitudes of Gueſts in; into which, before converſion, all the vaine, light, wanton, profane, diſſolute thoughts, that poſte up and down the world (as your thoughts doe) and run riot all the day, have free, open acceſſe, the heart keeps open houſe to them, gives them willing, cheerfull welcome, and entertainment; accompanies them, travails ore all the world for the daintieſt pleaſures to feed them with; *Lodgeth*, harbours them, and there they, like unruly Gallants, and Royſters, *lodge*, and revell it day and night and defile thoſe roomes they lodge in, with their loathſome filth' and vomits. *How long*, ſayes the Lord, *ſhall they lodge therein?*

Whilſt

Whilſt I with my Spirit, my Son, and traine of graces, *ſtand at the doore and knocke, Revel.*3.20. and cannot finde admittance; of all which filthineſſe, &c. the *Heart* this houſe muſt be *waſhed*; *Waſh thy heart from wickednesſe. Waſht*, not ſwept onely of groſſer evils (as *Mat.* 12.43. the *houſe (the uncleane ſpirit re-enters into)* is ſaid to be ſwept of evils that lay looſe and uppermoſt) but *waſht* and cleanſed of thoſe defilements which ſtick more cloſe, and are incorporated and wrought into the Spirit. And 2. thoſe vaine and unruly gueſts muſt be turned out of dores, without any warning, they have ſtaid there long enough; too long; *How long?* and the *time paſt may ſuffice*; as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, they muſt lodge there no more. The houſe, the ſoule is not in converſion to be pull'd downe, but onely theſe gueſts turned out; and though kept out they cannot be, they will ſtill enter whilſt we are in theſe houſes of clay, yet lodge they muſt not: if thoughts of anger and revenge come in, in the morning or day time, they muſt be turned out ere night, *Let not the Sun go down upon your wrath, Epheſ.*4.26. For ſo you may come to lodge yet a worſer gueſt in your heart with them: *Give not place to the Devill* (for it follows) who will *bring ſeven worſe with him.* If uncleane thoughts offer to come to bed to thee, when thou lyeſt downe, let them not lodge with thee. To conclude, it is not what thoughts are in your hearts, and paſſe through them; as what lodging they have, that doth difference your repentance: many good thoughts and motions may paſſe, as *Strangers* thorow a bad mans heart; and ſo likewiſe multitudes of vaine thoughts may make a thorow-fare of a Believers heart, and diſturb him in good duties, by knockings and interruptions, and breakings in upon the heart of a good man; but ſtill they lodge not there; are not foſtered, harboured.

My ſcope in our ordinary courſe is, to diſcover the wickedneſſe and vanity of the heart by nature: in the heart we are yet but in the upper parts of it, the underſtanding, and the defilements thereof, which are to be waſht out of it, and the next defilement, which in my broken order I meane to handle, is that which is here ſpecified, *The Vanity of your Thoughts:* For the diſcovery ſake of which onely, I choſe this Text, as my ground; *That* is it, therefore, which I will chiefly inſiſt upon. A *ſubject* which, I confeſſe, would prove of all elſe the vaſteſt.

To

To make an exact particular discovery of the vanities in our thoughts, to travell over the whole Creation, and to take a survey, and give an account of all that vanity abounds in all the creatures, was (as you know) the taske of the wisest of men, *Solomon*; the flowre of his studies and labours: But the *vanitie of our thoughts*, are as multiplied much in us; this *little world* affords more varieties of vanities, than the Great. Our thoughts made the *creatures subject to vanitie*, *Rom.* 8. 20. therefore themselves are subject to vanity much more. In handling of them I will shew you, 1. What is meant by *Thoughts*. 2. *What* by *vanity*. 3. *That our thoughts are vaine*. 4. Wherein that vanity doth consist, both in the generall, and some particulars.

First, what is *meant by thoughts*, especially as they are the intended subject of this discourse, which in so vast an argument I must necessarily set limits unto: 1. By *thoughts*, the Scriptures doe comprehend all the *internall* acts of the minde of man, of what faculty soever, all those reasonings, consultations, purposes, resolutions, intents, ends, desires, and cares of the minde of man, as opposed to our *externall* words and actions, so *Isay* 66. 18. All acts are divided into those two, *I know their works and their thoughts*: what is transacted within the minde, is called the *thoughts*; what thereof doe manifest themselves, and break out in actions, are called *works*. And so *Genes.* 6. 5. *Every imagination of the thoughts, (omne figmentum)* all the creatures the minde frames within it selfe, purposes, desires, &c. (as it is noted in the margin) *are evill*; where by thoughts are understood all that *comes within the minde*, (as *Ezech.* 11. 5. the phrase is) and so indeed wee vulgarly use it, and understand it, so *To remember* a man, is, to *thinke of him*, *Gen.* 40. 14. to have *purposed* a thing, we say, *I thought to doe it*. To take *care* about a businesse, is to *take thought*, 1 *Sam.* 9. 5. And the reason, why all may thus be called *the thoughts*, is, because indeed, all affections, desires, purposes, are stirred up by thoughts, bred, fomented, and nourished by them: no one thought passeth, but it stirreth some affection of feare, joy, care, griefe, &c. No, although they are thus *largely* taken here, yet I intend not to handle the *vanity* of them in so large a sense at present: I must confine my selfe, as strictly as may be, to the vanity of that, which is more *properly* called the

thinking, meditating, conſidering power of man, which is in his underſtanding or ſpirit, that being the ſubject I have in hand: *Thoughts* not being in this ſenſe oppoſed onely to *your works*, but unto purpoſes and intents, ſo *Hebr.* 4.12. as the *ſoule* and *ſpirit*, ſo thoughts and intents ſeeme to be oppoſed. And *Job* 20. 2, 3. *Thoughts* are appropriated to the *Spirit of underſtanding*. And againe yet more ſtrictly, for in the underſtanding I meane not to ſpeake of, generally, all thoughts therein, neither, as not of the *reaſonings* or *deliberations* in our actions: but thoſe *muſings* onely in the *Speculative* part.

And ſo, I can no otherwiſe expreſſe them to you, than thus. Thoſe ſame firſt, more *ſimple conceits, apprehenſions* that ariſe; thoſe *fancies, meditations*, which the underſtanding by the *helpe of fancy frames within it ſelfe of things*; thoſe whereon your mindes ponder and pore, and muſe upon things, theſe I mean by *thoughts*, I meane thoſe *talkings* of our minds with the things we know, as the Scripture calls it, *Prov.* 6. 22. thoſe ſame parleys, enterviews, chattings, the minde hath with the things let into it, with the things we feare, with the things we love. For all theſe things our mindes make their companions, and our thoughts hold them diſcourſe, and have a thouſand conceits about them; this I mean by *thoughts*. For beſides that *reaſoning* power, *deliberating* power, whereby we aske our ſelves continually, *What ſhall wee doe?* and whereby we reaſon and diſcuſſe things, which is a more inward cloſet, the Cabinet and privie councell of the heart, there is a more outward lodging, that preſence chamber, which entertaines all commers, which is the *thinking, meditating, muſing* power in man, which ſuggeſteth matter for deliberations, and conſultations, and reaſonings, which holds the *objects* till wee view them, which entertaineth all that come to ſpeake with any of our affections.

2. I adde, which *the mind frames within it ſelf*, ſo the Scripture expreſſeth their originall to us, and their manner of riſing, *Prov.* 6. 14. *Frowardneſſe is in his heart, fabricatur*, he *forgeth miſchiefe*, as a Smith doth Iron, hammers it out: and the thoughts are the materialls of this frowardneſſe in us; upon all the things which are preſented to us, the minde begets ſome thoughts, imaginations on them; and as *luſts*, ſo *thoughts* are conceived, *James* 1.

Iſay

Isay 59. 4. *They conceive miſchief, and bring forth iniquity, and hatch Cockatrice egges, and weave Spiders Webbes.* And *verſe* 7. he inſtanceth in *thoughts of iniquity*, becauſe our thoughts are ſpunne out of our owne hearts, are egges of our owne laying, though the things preſented to us be from without.

And this I adde to ſever them from ſuch *thoughts* as are *injected*, and caſt in, onely from without, which are children of anothers begetting, and often laid out of doores: ſuch as are blaſphemous thoughts caſt in *by Satan*, wherein if the ſoule be meerly paſſive, (as the word *Buffeting* implies, 2 *Cor.* 12. 7.) they are none of your thoughts, but his; wherein a man is but as one in a roome with another, where he heares another ſweare and curſe, but cannot get out from him; ſuch thoughts, if they be onely *from without*, defile not a man. For *nothing defiles a man, but what comes from within*, *Mat.* 15. 18, 19. or which the heart hath begotten upon it by the Devill, as thoughts of uncleanneſſe, &c. Wherein though he be the father, yet the heart is the mother and wombe, and therefore accordingly affect the heart, as naturall children doe, and by that we may diſtinguiſh them from the other, namely, when we have a ſoft heart, an inward love unto them, ſo that our hearts doe kiſſe the childe, then they are our *thoughts*, or elſe when the heart broods upon thoſe egges, then they are our *thoughts* though they come from without.

Though this is to be added, that even thoſe thoughts, wherein the ſoule is paſſive, and which Satan caſts in, which we doe no wayes owne, wherein he *raviſheth* the heart, rather than *begets* them on us, (if there be not any conſent to them in us, then it is but a *Rape*, as in law it is not) I yeild thoſe thoughts are puniſhments often of neglect of our thoughts, and of our ſuffering them to wander; as *Dinah*, becauſe ſhe went cunningly out, *to view the Daughters of the land*, was taken and raviſht, though againſt her will: yet it was a puniſhment of her curioſity: or elſe they are the puniſhment of the neglect of good motions of the ſpirit; which reſiſting, *we thereby grieve him*, and ſo he deales with us, as we with our children, ſuffers us to be ſcared with bugbeares and to be grieved by *Satan*, that we may learne what it is to neglect him, and harbour vanity. Laſtly, I adde, which the minde, *in and by it ſelfe*, or by the help of fancie, thus begets and

entertains, becauſe there are no thoughts or likeneſſes of things at any time in our fancies, but at the ſame time they are in the underſtanding alſo reflected unto it: As when two Looking-glaſſes are placed oppoſite and nigh each to other, looke what ſpecies appears in the one, doe alſo in the other.

Secondly, let us ſee what *vanity* is, take it in all the acceptations of it; It is true of our *thoughts* that they are *vaine*.

1. It is taken for *unprofitableneſſe*. So *Eccleſ.* 1.2,3. *All is vaine*, becauſe there is no profit *in them under the Sun*, ſuch are our thoughts by nature, the wiſeſt of them will not ſtand us in any ſtead in time of need, in time of temptation, diſtreſſe of conſcience, day of death or Judgment, 1 *Cor.* 2. 6. *All the wiſdome of* the wiſe comes to *nought*, *Prov.* 10. 20. *The heart of the wicked is little worth*, not a penny for them all, whereas the thoughts of a godly man are his *treaſure: Out of the good treaſure of his heart, he brings them forth.* He mints them, and they are laid up as his riches. *Pſal.* 138. 17. *How precious are they?* he there ſpeaks of our *thoughts of God*, as the object of them, *thy thoughts*, that is, *(of thee) are precious.*

2. *Vanity* is taken for lightneſſe. *Lighter than vanity* is a phraſe uſed, *Pſal.* 62. 9. and whom is it ſpoken of? of *men*, and if any thing in them be *lighter* than other, it is their *thoughts* which ſwim in the uppermoſt parts, float at the top, is as the ſcum of the heart; when all the beſt, and wiſeſt, and deepeſt, and ſolideſt thoughts in *Balthazar* a Prince, were *weighed*, they were *found too light*, *Dan.* 5. 17.

3. *Vanity* is put for *folly*. So *Prov.* 12. 11. *Vaine men*, is made all one with men *void of underſtanding*. Such are our thoughts among other evils which are ſaid to come *out of the heart*, *Marke* 7. 22. ἀφρωσυνη is reckoned as one, *fooliſhneſſe*, that is, thoughts that are ſuch as *mad men* have, and *fooles*, nothing to the purpoſe, of which there can be made no uſe, which a man knowes not whence they ſhould come, nor whither they would *without dependance.*

4. It is put for *Inconſtancy*, and *frailty*, therefore *vanity* and a *ſhadow* are made *Synonomaes*, *Pſal.* 144. 4. ſuch are our *thoughts*, flitting and periſhing, as bubbles, *Pſal.* 146. 4. *All their thoughts periſh.*

Laſtly,

Laſtly, they are *vaine*, that is, indeed, *wicked* and *ſinfull vanity* in the Text here, is yoaked with *wickedneſſe*: and *vaine men*, and *ſonnes of Belial* are all one, 2 *Chron.* 13. 17. And ſuch are our thoughts by nature. *Prov.* 24. 9. *The thought of fooliſhneſſe is ſinne.* And therefore a man is to be humbled for a *proud thought*, *Prov.* 30. 32. For ſo *laying hand* on the mouth is taken, as *Job* 39. 37. for being *vile in a mans owne eyes.*

And becauſe this is the ſenſe I chiefly muſt inſiſt on, in handling the *vanitie of the thoughts*, and alſo men uſually thinke that *thoughts are free*; I will therefore prove this to you, which is the onely Doctrine raiſed, that *Thoughts are ſinnes.*

1. The *Law judgeth* them, *Heb.* 4. 12. *rebukes a man* for them, 1 *Cor.* 14. 25. and therefore they are tranſgreſſions of the Law: and ſo alſo did Chriſt rebuke the Phariſees for *their ill thoughts*, *Mat.* 9. 4. which argues the excellency of the Law, that reacheth thoughts.

2. Becauſe they are *Capable of pardon*, and muſt be pardoned, or we cannot be ſaved, *Acts* 8. 22. which argues the multitudes of *Gods compaſſions*, ſeeing thoughts are ſo infinite.

3. They are to be *repented of*, yea repentance is expreſſed, as to begin at them. So *Eſay* 55. 7. *Let the unrighteous man forſake his thoughts*; and a man is never truely and thoroughly wrought on, (as 2 *Cor.* 10. 4, 5.) *till every thought be brought into obedience*; which argues that they are naturally rebellious, and contrary to grace. And this alſo argueth the *Power of grace*, which is able to *rule* and to ſubdue ſo great an Army as our thoughts are, and command them all, as one day it will doe, when we are perfectly holy.

4. *They defile the man:* which nothing defiles but ſinne, *Mat.* 15. 15, 16, 17. *Out of the heart proceed evill thoughts, theſe defile the man.*

5. They are an *abomination to the Lord*, who hates nothing but ſin, and *whoſe pure eyes can endure to behold no iniquity*, *Prov.* 15. 16. as good *Meditations are acceptable*, *Pſal.* 25. *ult.* ſo, by the rule of contrary, *bad*, are *abominable.*

6. They *hinder* all *good* we ſhould doe, and ſpoile our beſt performances. Vaine thoughts draw the heart away in them, that when a man ſhould draw nigh to God, his *Heart*, by reaſon of

his thoughts, *is farre off from him*, Esay 29. 16. *A mans heart goes after his covetonſneſſe*, when he ſhould *hear*, as the Prophet ſpeaks, becauſe his thoughts thus run. Now nothing elſe but ſinne could ſeparate, and what doth eſtrange us from God, is ſinne, and enmity to him.

7. Our thoughts are the *firſt motioners of all the evill in us.* For they make the motion, and alſo bring the heart and object together; are panders to our luſts, hold up the object, till the heart hath plaid the adulterer with it, and committed folly, ſo in ſpeculative uncleanneſſe, and in other luſts, they hold up the images of thoſe gods they create, which the heart falls downe and worſhips; they preſent credit, riches, beauty, till the heart hath worſhipt them, and this when the things themſelves are abſent.

To come now to thoſe *Particulars* wherein this *vanity* of the *thinking*, meditating power of the minde conſiſts.

Firſt, I will diſcover it in regard of *thinking what is good* how unable and loath, &c. it is to good thoughts; and ſecondly in regard of the readineſſe *of it to thinke of evill and vain things.*

For the firſt, firſt in *a want of ability* ordinarily, and naturally to raiſe and extract holy and uſefull conſiderations and thoughts from all ordinary occurrences, and occaſions; which the minde, ſo farre as it is ſanctified, is apt unto. A heart ſanctified, and in whoſe affections true grace is enkindled, out of all Gods dealings with him, out of the things he ſees and heares, out of all the objects are put into the thoughts he diſtilleth holy, and ſweet, and uſefull meditations: and it naturally doth it, and ordinarily doth it, ſo farre as it is ſanctified. So our Saviour Chriſt, all ſpeeches of others which he heard, all accidents and occurrences did ſtill raiſe and occaſion in him heavenly meditations, as we may ſee throughout the whole Goſpels: when he came by a well, he ſpeaks of the *Water of life*, *John* 4, &c. Many inſtances might be given; *He* in his thoughts tranſlated the booke of the creatures, into the booke of grace, and ſo did *Adams* heart in innocency: his *Philoſophie* might be truely termed *Divinity*, becauſe he ſaw God in all; all raiſed up his heart to thankfulneſſe and praiſe: So now in like manner our mindes, ſo farre as they are ſanctified, will doe. As the *Philoſophers ſtone* turnes all Metals into Gold;

Gold; As the Bee ſucks honey out of every flower, and a good ſtomack ſucks out ſome ſweet and wholſome nouriſhment out of what it takes unto it ſelfe: ſo doth a holy heart, ſo farre as ſanctified, convert and digeſt all into ſpirituall uſefull thoughts; this you may ſee, *Pſalme* 107. *ult.* *That Pſalme* gives many inſtances of Gods providence, *and Wonderfull workes which he doth for the ſonnes of men*; as deliverances by Sea, where men ſee his wonders: deliverance to Captives, &c. and ſtill the foot of the Song is, *Oh that men would therefore praiſe the Lord for the wonderfull workes he doth for the ſonnes of men.* Now after all theſe inſtances, he concludes, that though others paſſe over ſuch occurrences with ordinary ſlight thoughts, yet ſayes he, *The righteous ſhall ſee it, and rejoice:* that is, extract comfortable thoughts out of all, which ſhall be matter of joy, and *who ſo is wiſe will obſerve theſe things*, that is, makes holy obſervations out of all theſe, and out of a principle of wiſdome he underſtands Gods goodneſſe in all, and ſo his heart is raiſed to thoughts of praiſe, and thankfulneſſe, and obedience. Now compare with this the 92 *Pſalme* made for *the Sabbath* (when in imitation of God, who that day viewed his workes, we are, on our *Lords day*, ſtill to raiſe holy praiſefull thoughts out of them to his glory, which he that penned that *Pſalme* then did, *verſe* 1, & 2. and) *verſe* 5. *How great are thy workes! &c. A brutiſh man knowes not, nor will a foole underſtand this:* that is, he being a beaſt, and having no ſanctified principle of wiſdome in him, looks no further then a beaſt into all the workes of God, and occurrences of things; looks on all bleſſings as things provided for mans delight by God: but he extracts ſeldome holy ſpirituall and uſefull thoughts out of all, he wants the art of doing it.

If injuries be offered us by others, what doe our thoughts diſtill out of thoſe wrongs, but thoughts of revenge? we meditate how to requite it againe. But ſee how naturally *Davids* minde diſtills other thoughts of *Shimei's* curſing, 2 *Sam.* 16. 11. *God hath bidden him*, and it may prove a good ſigne of God's favour, *God may requite good for it.* When we ſee judgments befall others, ſevere thoughts of cenſure our minds are apt to raiſe againſt our Brother, as *Job's* friends did. But a godly man whoſe minde

minde is much ſanctified, raiſeth other thoughts out of it, *Prov.* 21.22. *Wiſely conſiders, &c.*

So when outward mercies befall us, the next thoughts we are apt to have, is to project eaſe by our wealth, thou *haſt goods for many yeares:* and when judgments befall us, we are apt to be fil'd with thoughts of complaint, and feares, and cares how to winde out again. But what were the firſt thoughts *Job* had upon the news of the loſſe of all? *God hath given, and the Lord hath taken, bleſſed be the Lord for all.*

Such thoughts as theſe (which all opportunities hint unto) a good heart is apprehenſive of, and doth naturally raiſe for its owne uſe. So farre *Barren as our thoughts are, ſo farre vaine.*

Secondly, the *vanity* and ſinfulneſſe of the minde appeares in a *loathneſſe* to *entertaine holy thoughts*, to begin to ſet it ſelfe to thinke of God, and the things belonging unto our peace; even as loath they are to this as School-boyes are to goe to their Books; or to buſie their mindes about their leſſons, their heads being full of play; ſo loath are our minds to enter into ſerious conſiderations, into ſad ſolemne thoughts of God, or death, &c. Men are as loath to think of *death*, as theeves of the *execution*; or to think of *God*, as they are of their Judge. So to goe over their owne actions, in a review of them, and read the blurd writing of their hearts, and to *commune with them*, at night in the end of the day, (as *David* did, *Pſal.* 119. 59.) men are as loath to doe this, as School-boyes are to perſe their leſſons, and the falſe Latins they have made, *Job* 21. *Depart from us* (ſay they in *Job*) unto God, from their thoughts they meant it, for it follows, *we deſire not the knowledge of thy waies:* They would not thinke of him, or know them by their good wills; and therefore our mindes like a bad ſtomack, are nauſeated with the very ſcent of good things, and ſoone caſt them up againe, *Rom.* 1. 28. *They like not to retaine the knowledge of God:* let us goe and trie to winde up our ſoules, at any time, to holy meditations, to thinke of what we have heard, or what we have done, or what is our duty to doe, and we ſhall finde our mindes like the pegs of an inſtrument, ſlip between our fingers, as we are a winding them up, and to fall downe ſuddenly againe, ere we are aware of it: yea, you ſhall finde, will labour

to

to ſhun what may occaſion ſuch thoughts; even as men goe out of the way, when they ſee they muſt meet with one they are loath to ſpeake withall; yea men dare not be alone, for feare ſuch thoughts ſhould return upon them. The beſt ſhall finde a gladneſſe, for an excuſe, by other occaſions to knock off their thoughts from what is good: whereas in thinking of vain earthly things, we think the time paſſeth too faſt, clocks ſtrike too ſoone, houres paſſe away ere we are aware of it.

Thirdly, the *vanity* and ſinfulneſſe of the mind appeares in the godly, that though they entertaine good thoughts, yet the mind is not, will not be *long intent* on them. Some things there are, which we are, and can be intent upon, and accordingly dwell long upon them, and therefore in *Iob* 17. 11. *The thoughts* are called the *poſſeſſions of the heart*, (ſo it is in the originall, and noted in the margin) ſuch thoughts as are pleaſing, the heart dwels on them; yea ſo intent are we often, that they hinder our ſleepe: as tis ſaid of wicked men, *They cannot ſleepe for multitude of thoughts, Eccleſ.* 5. 12. *So, to deviſe froward things, Solomon* ſayes, *Prov.* 16. 30. *That a man ſhuts his eyes*, that is, is exceeding attentive, poreth upon his plots; for ſo a man doth uſe to do, to ſhut his eyes when he would be intent, and therefore it is ſo expreſſed. But now let the minde be occupied and buſied about good things, and things belonging to our peace, how unſteady is it? which things ſhould yet draw out the intention of the minde: For the more excellent the object is, the ſtronger our intention ſhould be. God is the moſt glorious object our minds can faſten on, the moſt alluring. The thoughts of whom therefore ſhould ſwallow up all other, as not worthy to be ſeene the ſame day with him: But I appeale to all your experiences, if your thoughts of him be not moſt unſteady, and are, (that I may ſo compare it) as when we looke upon a Starre thorow an Optique glaſſe, held with a palſie ſhaking hand: It is long ere wee can bring our mindes to have ken of him, to place our eyes upon him, and when we have, how doe our hands ſhake, and ſo loſe ſight ever and anon? So whilſt we are in never ſo ſerious talke with him, when all things elſe ſhould ſtand without, and not dare to offer entrance, till we have done with him, yet how many chinkes are there in the heart, at which other thoughts

come in? and our minds leave God, and follow them, and *go after our covetousnesse*, our credit, &c. as the Prophets phrase is, *Ezech.* 33. So when we are hearing the Word, how doe our minds ever and anon runne out of the Church, and come in againe, and so doe not heare halfe that is said? So when we are at our callings, which God bids us to be conversant about with all our might, *Eccl.* 9. 10. yet our minds like idle truants, or negligent servants, though sent about never so serious a businesse, yet goe out of the way to see any sport, runne after the Hares that crosse the way, follow after Butter-flies that buzze about us.

And so when we come to pray, Christ bids *watch to prayer*, *Mark.* 13. 33. that is, as if we were at every dore to place a guard that none come in and disturbe and knock us off. But how oft doth the heart nod, and fall asleep, and run into another world, as men in dreams doe? Yea so naturally are destractions to us, when we are busied about holy duties, that as excrements come from men, when very weake and sick, ere they are aware of it; so doe worldly thoughts from us, and we are carried out of that streame of good our minde was running in, into some by-creek ere we are aware of it.

Fourthly, the *vanity* of the minde appeares, in regard of *good* things, that if he doth thinke of them, yet it doth it *unseasonably*. It is with your thoughts as with your speeches, their goodnesse lies in their placing and order, *Prov.* 25. 11. *If fitly spoken*, they are *as Apples of Gold in pictures of silver*. And as a man is to bring forth actions, so thoughts in *due season*; as those *fruits*, so these *buds* should come out in *season*, *Psalm.* 10. Now the vanity of the minde appeares in thinking of some good things, sometimes unseasonably; when you are praying, you should not onely have no worldly thoughts come in, but no other then praying thoughts. But then haply some notions of, or for a Sermon will come readily in: so in hearing, a man shall often have good thoughts that are heterogeneall to the thing in hand; So when a man is falling downe to prayer, looke what thing a man had forgotten, when it should have beene thought of, will then come in, or what will affect a man much comes in to divert him. This *misplacing* of *thoughts* (suppose they be good) is yet from

from a vanity of the minde; did thoſe thoughts come at another time, they ſhould be welcome: we finde our minds ready to ſpend thoughts about any thing, rather then what God at preſent calls unto. When we goe to a Sermon, we finde we could then ſpend our thoughts more willingly about reading, or happily ſearching our hearts; unto which at another time, when called to it, we ſhould be moſt unwilling to. We could be content to runne wild over the fields of meditations and miſcellanious thoughts, though about good, rather then to be tied to that taske, and kept in one ſet path.

In *Adam* and Chriſt no thought was miſplaced, but though they were as *many* as the *Stars*, yet they marched in their *courſes*, and keep their ranks. But ours as Meteors dance up and downe in us. And this *diſorder* is a *vanity* and *ſinne*, be the thought materially never ſo good. Not every one that hath the beſt part muſt therefore firſt ſtep up the Stage to Act, but take his right cue. In Printing let the letters be never ſo fair, yet if not placed in their order, and rightly compoſed, they marre the ſenſe. Souldiers upon no termes ſhould breake their rankes: ſo nor ſhould our thoughts, *Pro.* 16. 3. There is a promiſe to a *Righteous man, that* (as ſome read it) *his thoughts ſhall be ordered.*

And ſo much for the firſt part, *The private* ſinfulneſſe in our *thoughts*; in reſpect of *what is good.*

Now ſecondly, I proceed to diſcover that *poſitive vanity*, which appeareth in our thoughts in regard *of what is evill.* And here it is not to be expected, nor indeed can it be performed by any man, to reckon up the ſeverall particularities of all thoſe vaine thoughts which runne through mans heart; I will inſiſt onely on ſome more generall diſcoveries, to which particulars may be reduced for a taſte of the reſt.

Firſt, the *vanity* of them diſcovers it ſelfe, in that which Chriſt calls, *Mark* 7. 22. ἀφροσύνη, *fooliſhneſſe*: that is, ſuch thoughts as mad men have, and fooles; which fooliſhneſſe is ſeen both in that unſetled wantonneſſe and *unſtayednеſſe* of the minde in thinking, that like quick-ſilver it cannot fixe, but as *Solomon* ſayes, *Prov.* 17. 24. *A fooles eyes are in the ends of the earth*, are gariſh, and run up and downe from one end of the earth to the other, ſhooting and ſtreaming, as thoſe Meteors

you ſee ſometimes in the ayre. And though indeed the minde of man is nimble and able thus to runne from one end of the earth to another, (which is its ſtrength and excellency) yet God would not have this ſtrength and nimbleneſſe, and metall-ſpirit in curvetting and trembling, (as I may call it) but in ſteady directing all our thoughts ſtraight on to his glory, our owne ſalvation, and the good of others; he gave it this nimbleneſſe to turn away from evil, and the firſt appearance of it. As we are to walke in Gods wayes he calls us to, ſo every thought, as well as every action is a ſtep: and therefore ought to be ſteady, *Make ſtraight ſteps to your feet*, ſayes the Apoſtle, *Hebrews* 12. 13. turning not to the right hand nor to the left, untill we come to the journeys end of that buſineſſe we are to thinke of. But our thoughts, at beſt, are as wanton Spaniels, who though indeed they goe with and accompany their Maſter, and come to their journeys end with him in the end, yet doe runne after every Bird, and wildly purſue every flock of ſheepe they ſee. This unſteadineſſe, it ariſeth from the like curſe on the minde of *Man*, as was on *Caine*, that it being *driven from the preſence of the Lord*, it proves a vagabond, *and ſo mens eyes are in the ends of the earth.*

This fooliſhneſſe or ἀφρωσυνη is alſo ſeene in that *Independence* in our thoughts; they hanging oft together as ropes of ſand; this we ſee more evidently in dreames: And not onely them, but when awake alſo, and *that*, when we would ſet our ſelves to be moſt ſerious, how doe our thoughts jangle and ring back-ward? and as wanton Boyes, when they take pens in their hands, ſcribble broken words that have no dependence. Thus doe our thoughts: and if you would but looke over the copies thereof, which you write continually, you would finde as much non-ſenſe in your thoughts, as you finde in mad mens ſpeeches. This madneſſe and diſtemper is in the minde ſince the fall (though it appeares not in our words, becauſe we are wiſer) that if notes were taken of our thoughts, we ſhould find thoughts ſo vagrant, that we know not how they come in, nor whence they came, nor whither they would. But as *God* doth *all things* in *weight*, *number*, and *meaſure*, ſo doth his Image in us, ſo farre as it is renewed. And, by reaſon of theſe two, the *folly*, *unſetledneſſe*, and

and *independence* of our thoughts, we bring our thoughts often to no iſſue, to no perfection, but wilder away our time *in thinking* (as you uſe to ſay) *of nothing*, and as *Seneca* ſayes of mens *lives*, as of Ships that are toſt up and downe at Sea, it may be ſaid they have beene *toſſed much*, but *ſayled* nothing; The like in this reſpect may be ſaid of the thoughts: Or as when men make imperfect daſhes, and write non-ſenſe, *They are ſaid to ſcribble, they doe not write*: So, in theſe follies and independencies, we wilder and *loſe our ſelves, we doe not thinke*.

But 2. on the contrary if any *ſtrong luſt*, or violent paſſion be up, then our thoughts are *too fixed* and *intent*, and run in ſo far into ſuch ſinfull objects, that they cannot be pulld out againe, or any way diverted or taken off: which is another vanity. For our thoughts and our underſtanding part was ordained to moderate, allay, and cool, and take off our paſſions, when they are a playing over, to rule and govern them. But now our thoughts are themſelves ſubjected to our affections, and like fuell put under them, doe but make them boile the more. And although our thoughts doe firſt ſtirre up our fears, joyes, deſires, &c. yet theſe being ſtirred up once, chain, and fix, and hold our thoughts to thoſe objects, ſo as we cannot looſen them again. Therefore ſayes Chriſt to his Diſciples, *Why are you troubled, and why doe thoughts ariſe in your hearts?* For perturbations in the affections cauſe thoughts like fumes and vapours to aſcend. Thus if a *paſſion of fear* be up, how doth it conjure up multitudes of ghoſtly thoughts which we cannot conjure down again, nor hide our eyes from? But which haunt us, and follow us up and down, where ever we goe, ſo as a man runs away purſued by his own thoughts, *the heart meditates in terrour*: As *Iſay* 33. 18. So when ſorrow is up, how doth it make us ſtudy the croſſe that lights upon us? which to forget would be an eaſe unto the mind. But a mans paſſions makes his thoughts to con it, and to ſay it by heart, over and over again, as if it would not have us forget it. So when *love* and *deſire* is up, be the thing what it will, we are taken with, as preferment, credit, beauty, riches, it ſets our thoughts a work to view the thing all over, from top to toe (as we ſay) to obſerve every part and circumſtance, that doth make it amiable unto us: as if a picture were to be drawn of

it. So when *joy* is up, we view the thing we rejoyce in, and read it over and over, as we doe a Book we like, and we mark every tittle, we are punctuall in it; yea, so inordinate are we herein, as often we cannot sleep for thinking on them. *Eccles.* 5. 12. *Abundance of riches will not suffer him to sleep, for the multitude of thoughts in his head,* speaking of a man who is covetous: how doe thoughts trouble the *Belshazzers* and *Nebuchadonezers* of the world? *Dan.* 4. 19. so *Proverbs* 4. 16. *They sleep not unlesse they have done mischief*; if their desires remain unsatisfied, they doe disturbe their thoughts, like froward children by their crying: so as, often, *these* which men count *free* (as the most doe *thoughts*) doe prove the greatest bondage and torment in the earth unto them, and doe hinder sleepe, the nurse of nature, eate out, and live upon the heart that bred them, weary the spirits, that when a man *shall say* (as *Job.* 7. 13.) *My bed shall comfort me*, by putting a parenthesis to his thoughts, and sad discourses, which he hath when awake, yet then they haunt a man; and as *verse* 14. *terrifie him.* A man cannot lay them aside as he doth his cloake: and when men die they will follow them to hell, and torment them worse there; your thoughts are one of the greatest executioners there, even the *Worme that dies not.*

Thirdly, the *vanity* of the minde appeares in *curiosity*, a longing, and itching to be fed with, and to know (and then delighting to thinke of) things that doe not at all concerne us. Take an experiment of this in Schollars (whose chiefe worke lies in this shop) how many precious thoughts are spent this way? as in curiosity of knowledge, as appeares by those the Apostle often rebukes, that affect, as 1 *Tim.* 6. 4, 20. *oppositions of science falsely so called* curiosities of knowledge *of things they have not seene.* So *Colloss.* 2. and 1 *Tim.* 4. 7. he calls such issues of mens braines, they dote on, *old wives fables*: because as fables please old wives, so doe these their minds, and of that itch they have in them, even as women with childe, in their longings, content not themselves with what the place affords, or the season, with what may be had; but often long after some unheard-of rarity, far fetcht, or, it may be, not at all to be had: Thus men not contenting themselves with the wonders of God, discovered in the depth of his Word and Works, they will launch into another Sea, and

World

World of their own making, and there they ſaile with pleaſure, as many of the School men did in ſome of their ſpeculations, ſpending their precious wits in framing curious webs out of their own bowels.

Take another inſtance alſo in others, who have leaſure and parts to read much, they ſhould ballaſt their hearts with the Word, and take in thoſe more precious words and wiſdome and ſound knowledge to profit themſelves and others, and to build upon their own ſouls, and whereby they may be enabled to ſerve their Country, but now what doe their curious fancies carry them unto, to be verſed in, but Play-bookes, jearing Paſquills, Romanſes, fained ſtayes, which are the curious needle-work of idle braines, ſo as they load their heads with *Apes and Peacocks feathers*, in ſtead of pearls and precious ſtones; ſo as a man may ſay as *Solomon*, *Prov.* 15. 14. *The heart of him that hath underſtanding ſeeketh knowledg, but the mouth of fools feeds on fooliſhneſſe.* Fooliſh diſcourſes pleaſe their ears and eyes to read: all theſe being but purveiors (as it were) for food, for the thoughts, like Camelions men live on aire and winde.

To leave them, how do others out of meer curioſity to know and pleaſe their thoughts, liſten after all the newes that flies up and down the world, ſcum all the froth that floats in fooliſh mens mouths, and pleaſe themſelves only with talking, thinking, and hearing of it?

I doe not condemne all herein: ſome their ends are good, and they can make uſe of it, and doe as *Nehemiah* did, who inquired how things went at *Jeruſalem* to rejoyce with Gods People, and mourn with them, and pray for them, and to know how to faſhion their Prayers accordingly: But I condemne that curious itch that is in them, when it is done but meerly to pleaſe their fancies; which is much delighted with new things, though they concern us not; ſuch the *Athenians* were, *Acts* 17. 21. How doe ſome men long all the week till they have events and iſſues, and make it a great part of the happineſſe of their lives, to ſtudy the ſtate more then their own hearts, and affaires of their callings: who take actions of State as their text to ſtudy the meaning of, and to preach on where-ever they come. I ſpeak of thoſe that yet lay not to heart the miſeries of the Church of Chriſt,

Christ, nor help them with their prayers, if at any time they happen.

The like curiosity is seen in many, in desiring to know the secrets of other men, which yet would doe them no good to know, and who doe study mens actions and ends, not to reform, or doe good to them, but to know them, and think and muse thereof, when alone, with pleasure; this is curiosity, and properly a vanity of the thinking power, which it mainly pleaseth; and is indeed a great sinne, when much of mens most pleasing thoughts are spent on things concern them not. For the things we ought to know, and which doe concern us, are enough to take up all our thoughts alone, neither shall we have any to spare: and thoughts are precious things, the immediate fruits and buds of an immortall nature; and God hath given us power to coyne them, to lay them out in things concern our own good, and of our neighbours, and his own glory; and thus not to spend them is the greatest waste in the world; examine what Corn you put in to grind for God ought to have toll of all. *Prov.* 24. 8. *He that deviseth evill shall be called a mischievous person*, not alwayes he that doth a mischievous action, but that deviseth it: and *verse* 9. he aggravates it, *à minori, for every thought is sinne*, then a combination and conspiracy of wicked thoughts is much more.

But 4. this is a worse *vanity* then this, and that is that intimated *Rom.* 13. *ult. Taking thought to fulfill the lusts of the flesh*, πρόνοιαν ποιεῖσθε [*To make projects for it.*] For thoughts are the Caterers for our lusts, and lay in all their provision, they are they that look out where the best markets are, the best opportunities for sinning in any kind, the best bargaines for credit, for preferment, for riches, &c. For example, would a man rise? his thoughts study the art of it, men frame their own ladder to climb withall, invent wayes how to do it, though often it proves as to *Haman* their own Gallows. Would they be rich? what doe they study? even all cheats and tricks on the Cards, (as I may so speak) that is, all the cunning tricks of the world, all the wayes of oppressing, defrauding, and going beyond their brethren, so to pack things in all their dealings, that they themselves should be the winners, and those that deal with them,

them, the losers, *Isay* 32. 7. It is said, *That the Instruments of the churlish are evill, and he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor:* would a man undermine his opposite, as one that stands in his light, and who hinders his credit? he'll digge and fall a pioning, with his thoughts, his engins, in the night; digge a pit, as the *Scripture phrase is,* and digge deep to hide his counsell, to blow him up in the end, and so as he shall not know who hurt him; and this is worse then all the former, this studied artificiall villany. The more devising there is in sinne, the worse: therefore the fact about *Uriah,* not so much that of *Bathsheba,* is objected against *David,* because he used art in it; he *took thought for it,* but in the matter of *Bathsheba, thoughts took him.*

Fiftly, the fifth is the *representing* or acting *over sinnes,* in our thoughts and imaginations, personating those pleasures by imagination, which at present we enjoy not really, faining and imagining our selves to act those sinfull practises we have not opportunity outwardly to performe: *speculative wickednesse* Divines doe call it, which to be in the power of imagination to doe, is evident to you by your dreames; when fancy playes its part most, and to allude to what the Prophet sayes, makes us beleeve *we eat when we are an hungry, to drink when our soules are thirsty. Isay* 29. 8. But I mean not to speak of the power and corruption of it, as in our dreames: it were well if, as the Apostle speakes of *Drunkennesse,* that this speculative wickednesse were onely *in the night.* But corrupt and distempered affections doe cast men into such dreames in the day, and when they are awake, there are then (to borrow the Apostles expression) *filthy dreames,* Jude 8. *that defile the flesh,* even when awake: when, their lustswanting work, their fancy erects to them a stage, and they set their imaginations and thoughts a work to entertaine their filthy and impure desires, with shewes and playes of their own making, and so *reason* and the intention of their mindes, sit as spectatours all the while to view with pleasure, till their thoughts inwardly act over their own unclean desires, ambitious projects, or what ever else they have a mind unto.

So *vaine* and empty is the heart of man become, so *impatient* are our desires and lusts of interruption in their pleasures, so sinfull and corrupt.

First, vain and empty it appears to be in this; for take all the pleasures of sin, when they are never so fully, solidly, really, and substanstially enjoyed, they are but shadowes, a meer out-side and figure, as the Apostle calls the world. It is opinion of imagination that casts that varnish of goodnesse on them, which is not truly in them. So *Felix* and *Bernices* pomp is termed πολυφαντασία, but now this speculative enjoying of them onely in imagination, (which many mens hearts take so much pleasure in) the pleasing our selves in the bare thoughts and imaginations of them, this is but a shadow of these shadowes, that the soule should *Ixion* like embrace and commit adultery with clouds only; this is a *vanity* beyond all other vanities, that maketh us vainer then other creatures, who though *subject to vanity*, yet not to such as this.

Secondly, it argues our desires to be impatient, to be detained from, or interrupted of their pleasures. When the soul shall be found so greedy, that when the heart is debarred or sequestred from those things it desires, and wants means or opportunities to act its lusts, as not being to stay, it will at least enjoy them in imagination, and in the *interim*, set fancy to entertain the mind with empty pictures of them drawn in its own thoughts.

3. Thus they appear also to be exceeding sinfull and corrupt; an *outward* act of sinne, it is but as an act of *whoredome* with the creature when *really* enjoyed: But this is *Incest*, when we defile our souls and spirits with these imaginations and likenesses which are begotten in our own fancies, being the children of our own hearts.

And yet (my brethren) such speculative enjoying of pleasures, and acting over of sins the mind of man is full of, as will appear in many particulars.

First, look what comforts men have *at present* in their possession and at command, what *excellencies* or endowments, men love to be alone to study, and think of them, and when they are sequestred from the present use of them, yet they will then be againe and again recounting and casting of them up, taking a survey of their happinesse in them, applauding their own hearts in their conditions. And as rich men that love money, love to be looking on it, and telling it over; so doe men to be summing up their comforts and priviledges they enjoy, which others want;

want; as how rich they are, how great, how they excell others in parts and gifts, &c. Oh how much of that precious ſand of our thoughts runs out this way! Thus he in the Goſpel, he keepes an audit in his heart; *Soule* (ſaith he) *thou haſt goods laid up for many yeares.* So *Haman, Eſter* 5. 11. takes an Inventory of his honours and goods, he talkes *of all the glory of his riches, and all the things wherein the King had promoted him.* So *Nebuchadnezzar, Dan.* 4. 30. as it may ſeeme, he was alone walking and talking to himſelfe like a foole, ſaying to himſelfe, *Is not this the great* Babel *which I have built by the might of my power, for the glory of my Majeſty?*

And as thus upon their comforts, ſo alſo upon their excellencies, as their learning, wiſdome, parts, &c. Men love to ſtand looking upon theſe in the glaſſe of their owne ſpeculation, as faire faces love to looke often and long in Looking-glaſſes: which, as it ariſeth from the ſelfe-flattery is in men; ſo alſo that they might keepe their happineſſe ſtill freſh and continued in their eye; which thoughts, when they raiſe not up the heart to thankfulneſſe to God, and are not uſed to that end, but are bellowes of pride; they are vaine and abominable in the eyes of God, as appeares by Gods dealing with thoſe fore-mentioned; for to the one he ſayes, *Thou foole, this night*; the other, *whilſt the word was in his mouth* (giving him no longer warning) he ſtrikes with madneſſe and brutiſhneſſe: and *Haman*, you know, was like a *Wall* that doth *ſwell* before it *breakes*, and falls to ruine and decay.

Secondly, *This ſpeculative* enjoying of pleaſures, and acting over ſins thus in fancie, doth appeare in regard *of things to come*; which when we have in view, or any hopes of mens thoughts goe forth afore to meet them, with how much contentment doe mens thoughts entertaine their deſires; with vaine promiſings and expectations afore-hand of their pleaſures, that are in view and in poſſibility to be enjoyed. So they in *Eſay* wind up their hearts to a higher pin of jollity in the midſt of their cups, in that their hearts thought and promiſed them, *To morrow ſhall be as to day, and much more abundant, Iſay* 56. 12. So they, *Jam.* 4. 13. they ſay with themſelves, *We will goe to ſuch a City, and continue there a yeere, and get gaine.* And the promiſe of this, and the

thoughts of it afore-hand feeds them, and keeps up their heart in comfort. When men riſe in a morning, they begin to fore-thinke with much pleaſure, what carnall pleaſures they have the advouſion and promiſe of that day or weeke, as to goe to ſuch company, and there be merry; to goe ſuch a pleaſant journey, enjoy ſatisfaction in ſuch a luſt, heare ſuch newes, &c. And thus as godly men *live by faith* in Gods promiſes, *Hab.* 2. 4. *Iſay* 38. 16. *By theſe men live, and this is the ſpirit of my life,* ſaith *Hezechia,* even *What God hath ſpoken, ver.* 15. So doe carnall men live much upon the promiſes of their own hearts and thoughts afore-hand (for to this head of vaine thoughts, theſe *vaine promiſings* are to be reduced, *Pſal.* 49. 11. *Their inward thought is, their houſes ſhall continue for ever,* and this thought pleaſeth them:) what pleaſure almoſt is there, which a man makes much account of, but he acts it firſt over in private in his owne thoughts? and thus doe men fooliſhly take their owne words and promiſes; and *ſo befoole themſelves in the end,* as *Jeremy* ſpeakes, *Jerem.* 17. They take up before-hand in their thoughts upon truſt, the pleaſures they are to enjoy, even as ſpend-thrifts doe their rents, or Heires their revenues before they come of age to enjoy their Lands, that when they come indeed to enjoy the pleaſures they expected, either they prove but *dreamers,* as *Iſay.* 29.6. they finde their *ſoules empty,* or ſo much under their expectation, and ſo ſtale, as they have little in them, that there ſtill proves more in the imagination then in the thing, which ariſeth from the vaſtneſſe and greedineſſe of mens deſires, as the cauſe hereof; for that makes them ſwallow up all at once. So *Hab.* 2. *Enlargeing his deſires as Hell, he heapes up all Nations, ſwallows them up in his thoughts.* So an ambitious Scholar doth all preferments that are in his view.

Thirdly, this *ſpeculative wickedneſſe* is exerciſed in like manner towards *things paſt,* in recalling namely, and reviving in our thoughts the pleaſure of ſinfull actions paſſed; when the minde runnes over the paſſages and circumſtances of the ſame ſins long ſince committed, with a new and freſh delight; when men raiſe up their dead actions long ſince buried in the ſame likeneſſe they were tranſacted in, and parley with them, as the Witch and *Saul* did with Satan in *Samuels* likeneſſe. And whereas they ſhould

draw

draw croſſe lines over them, and blot them out through faith in Chriſts Blood, they rather copy and write them over again in their thoughts with the ſame contentment. So an unclean perſon can ſtudy and view over every circumſtance paſſed in ſuch an act, with ſuch a perſon committed; ſo a vaine-glorious Scholler doth repeat in his thoughts an eminent performance of his, and all ſuch paſſages therein as were moſt elegant. And thus men chew the cud upon any ſpeech of commendation uttered by others of them. And all this even as a good heart doth repeat good things heard or read, with the remembrance alſo of what quickneſſe they had in ſuch and ſuch paſſages, and with what affections they were warmed, when they heard them; or as a godly man recalls with comfort the actions of a well-paſt life, as *Hezekiah* did, *Lord I have walked before thee with a perfect heart*; and thereby doe alſo ſtir and provoke their hearts to the like temper again: So on the contrary, doe wicked men uſe to recall, and revive the pleaſingeſt ſinfull paſſages in their lives to ſuck a new ſweetneſſe out of them: Then which nothing argues more *hardneſſe* and *wickedneſſe* of heart, or provokes God more. For,

Firſt, it argues much *wickedneſſe* of heart, and ſuch as when it is ordinary with the heart to doe thus, is not compatible with grace: for in the 6. of the *Romans*, *ver.* 12. the Apoſtle ſhewes that a good heart uſeth to repeat no ſuch fruit of ſinfull actions paſt, *But what fruit had you of thoſe things whereof ye are now aſhamed?* The Saints reap and diſtill nothing out of all thoſe flowers but ſhame and ſorrow, and ſad ſights: when *Ephraim* remembred his ſin, he was *aſhamed and repented*; and canſt thou in thy thoughts, reap a new harveſt and crop of pleaſure out of them again and again?

Secondly, it argues much hardneſſe of heart; nothing being more oppoſite to the truth and practiſe of repentance, the foundation of which is to call to mind the ſinne with ſhame and ſorrow, and to recall it with much more grief, then ever there was pleaſure in the committing of it: and whoſe property is to *hate* the *appearance* of it, and to enflame the heart with *zeal* and revenge againſt it. And thereby it provokes God exceedingly, our hearts are thereby embrued in a new guilt, we thereby ſtand

to, and make good our former act: even ſo, by remembring it with pleaſure, we provoke God to remember it with a new deteſtation of it, and ſo to ſend down new plagues; who, if we recall it with grief *would remember it no more:* we ſhew, we take delight to rake in thoſe wounds we have given Chriſt already; to view *the ſins of others* with pleaſure, *Rom.* 1. *ult.* is made more *then to commit them:* But much more to view and revive our own with a freſh delight: and therefore know that how-ever you may take delight here to repeat to your ſelves your old ſins, yet that in Hell nothing will gall you more, then the remembrance of them; every circumſtance in every ſin will then be as a dagger at thy heart. This was the rich mans task and ſtudy in hell, *to remember the good things he had received,* and his ſinnes committed in the abuſe of them. And if godly men here be made to *poſſeſſe the ſins of their youth with horrour,* as *Job, and to have them ever afore them,* as *David,* how will wicked men be continually affrighted with them in hell? whoſe puniſhment is in a great part ſet forth to us, by this *Pſalme* 50. 20. *I will ſet them in order before thee.*

Fourthly, the fourth thing wherein the *ſpeculative vanity* appeares is in acting ſinnes upon meere imaginary ſuppoſitions, men faigne and contrive to themſelves, and make a ſuppoſition to themſelves in their own thoughts, firſt of what *they would be,* and *then* what *they would doe.* Men create fooles paradiſes to themſelves, and then walk up and down in them; as, if they had money enough, what pleaſures they would have; if they were in ſuch places of preferment, how they would carry themſelves. To allude to that *Abſolom* ſaid, 2 *Sam.* 15. 4. *Oh if I were a Judge in the Land, I would do this or that, &c.* doing this with a great deal of pleaſure, almoſt as much as thoſe that really enjoy them. This may well be the meaning of that *Pſalme* 50. 18. whereof the hypocrite (who outwardly abſtaines from groſſe ſins) 'tis ſaid that *he conſenteth with the thief, and partaketh with the adulterer,* namely, in his *heart* and *fancy,* ſuppoſing himſelf with them, and ſo deſires to be doing what they doe. Thus take one who is naturally ambitious (whom both nature, parts and education have all made, but a *Bramble never to rule over the trees,* and hath fixt in a lower ſphere, as uncapable of riſing higher, or being greater,

as

as the earth is of becomming a Starre in Heaven, yet) he will take upon him in his owne heart, faining and ſuppoſing himſelfe to be, and then act the part of a great man there, erect a throne, and ſit downe in it; and thinkes with himſelfe what he would doe; if a King or a great Man &c. So take a man that is unclean, but now grown old, and a *dry tree*, and ſo cannot act his luſt as formerly, yet his thoughts ſhall ſupply what is wanting in his ſtrength or opportunity. And he makes his owne heart both Bawd, Brothel-houſe, Whore, Whoremonger, and all: ſo a man that is naturally voluptuous, loves pleaſures, but wants meanes to purchace them, yet his inclinations will pleaſe themſelves with the thoughts of what mixture and compoſition of delights he would have; he will ſet downe with himſelfe his Bill of fare, how he would have, if he might wiſh, his cup of pleaſure mingled, what ingredients put into it. So a man that is revengefull, and yet wants a ſting, yet he pleaſeth himſelfe with revengefull thoughts and wiſhes, and will be making invectives and railing dialogues againſt him, he hates when he is not by. A man in love, in his fancy he will court his Paramour though abſent, he will by his imagination make her preſent, and ſo frame ſolemne ſet ſpeeches to her.

In a word, let mens inclinations and diſpoſitions be of what kinde ſoever, let the impoſſibilities and improbabilities be never ſo great of being what they deſire; yet in their fancies and thoughts they will diſcover themſelves what they would be. *Totumque quod eſſe deſiderant ſibi apud ſemetipſos cogitationibus depingunt*, men will be drawing Maps of their deſires, calculating their owne inclinations, cut out a condition of life which fils their hearts, and they pleaſe themſelves withall: and there is no ſurer way to know a mans naturall inclination, than by this.

Firſt, which yet firſt is as great a folly as any other, imitating children herein; for is it not childiſh to make clay pies, and puppets? what elſe are ſuch fancies as theſe? and to be as children acting the parts of Ladies and Miſtreſſes, and yet ſuch *childiſhneſſe* is in mens hearts.

2. And ſecondly, a *vanity* alſo, becauſe a man ſets his heart on *what is no*: the things themſelves are not, if a man had them,

Prov.

Prov. 23. 5. but to pleaſe themſelves with ſuppoſitions is much worſe.

Thirdly this argues the greateſt incontentation of minde that may be, when men will in their owne thoughts put themſelves into another condition then God ever ordained for them.

Uſe 1.

HAving diſcovered the vanity of your thoughts and your eſtates thereby, be humbled for them; This I ground upon *Proverbs* 30. 21. where *Agur* teacheth us to humble our ſelves as well for thoughts as actions. *If thou haſt done fooliſhly in lifting up thy ſelfe, or if thou haſt thought evill, lay thy hand upon thy mouth.* Now as *ſmiting upon the thigh* is put for repentance and ſhame and ſorrow in *Ephraim*, *Jerem.* 31. 19. ſo is *laying the hand* upon the mouth put for greater and deeper humiliation, as arguing full conviction of ones guilt, *Rom.* 3. 19. *Every mouth muſt be ſtopped.* Having nothing to ſay, not to plead and excuſe, that thoughts are free, and it is impoſſible to be rid of them, &c. but as *Ezechiel*, 16. 65. *To remember and to be confounded, and never to open thy mouth more! to be vile, and not to anſwer againe*, as *Job* 39. 27, 28. this is to lay thy hand on thy mouth, that is, to humble thy ſelfe.

And indeed there is much cauſe, for your thoughts they are the firſt begotten, and eldeſt ſons of originall ſin, and therefore *the ſtrength of it*, as *Jacob* called *Reuben* the firſt-borne; yea alſo, and the *Parents* and begetters of all other ſins, their *brethren*; The firſt plotters and contrivers, and *Achitophels*, in all the treaſons and rebellions of our hearts and lives; the bellows and incendiaries of all inordinate affections; the Panders to all our luſts, that *take thought* to provide for the ſatisfying of them; the diſturbers in all good duties, that interrupt and ſpoyle and fly-blow all our prayers, that they ſtinke in the noſtrills of God.

And if their hainouſneſſe will nothing move you, conſider their number, for they are continually thus: which makes our ſins to be in number more then the ſands: the thoughts of *Solomons* heart were as the Sand, and ſo ours; not a minute, but as many

many thoughts paſſe from us, as in a minute ſands doe in an Houre-glaſſe. So that ſuppoſe, that taken ſeverally, they be the ſmalleſt and leaſt of your ſins, yet their *multitude* makes them more and heavier then all your other. Nothing ſmaller then a graine of *Sand*, but if there be a heap of them, there is nothing *heavier*, *Job. 6. 3. My griefe is heavier then the Sand.* Suppoſe they be in themſelves, but as Farthing-tokens, in compariſon of groſſe defilements: yet becauſe the Mint never lies ſtill, ſleeping nor waking, therefore they make up the greateſt part of that treaſure of wrath which we are a laying up: and know that God will reckon every Farthing, and in thy puniſhment bate thee not one vaine thought. And that God lookes upon our thoughts thus, ſee but the indictment he brings in againſt the old world; which ſtands ſtill upon record, *Gen. 6.* when he pronounced that heavy judgement of deſtroying the old world, doth he alledge their murthers, adulteries, and groſſe defilements chiefly as the cauſe? Their *thoughts* rather; which becauſe ſo many, and ſo *continually evil*, provoked him more then all their other ſins. Goe downe therefore into thy heart, and conſider them well, to humble thee, to make thee vile, and if in one room ſuch a treaſure of wickedneſſe be found laid up, what in all thoſe other *Chambers of the Belly*, as *Solomon* calls them? conſider them to humble thee, but not for all this their multitude to diſcourage thee. For God hath *more thoughts of mercy* in him, then thou haſt had of rebellion, *Pſal. 40. 5. Thy thoughts to us-ward*, (ſpeaking of thoughts of mercy) *are more then can be numbred.* Thou beganneſt but as yeſterday to thinke thoughts of rebellion againſt him, but his thoughts of mercy have beene *from everlaſting*, and reach to *everlaſting*: and therefore in *Eſay 55. ver. 7.* having made mention of *our thoughts, let the unrighteous man forſake his thoughts, and he will have mercy on him*; becauſe this objection of the multitude of them might come in to diſcourage men from hopes of mercy, therefore purpoſely he addes, *he will multiply to pardon*; and to aſſure us that he hath thoughts of mercy to out-vie ours of ſin, he addes, *for my thoughts* exceed yours, as *Heaven doth the earth.*

Uſe 2.

LEt us make for ever conſcience of them, ſo *Job* did, *Job.*31.1. I made a covenant with mine eyes, why ſhould I thinke upon a Maid? *Solomon* gives in eſpeciall charge, *above all keeping*, keep thy heart, *Prov.*4.23.

Firſt, thou art to keep the Lords day holy, thy *ſelfe unſpotted of the World. To keep thy brother, to keep all the Commandements, but above all to keep thy heart*, and in it *thy thoughts*; for this is the *Great Commandement*, becauſe it extends it ſelfe (as the foundation) unto them all: for as in the ſame Commandement where murther is forbidden, a malitious thought is alſo, and ſo of the reſt; So in keeping the thoughts thou virtually keepeſt all the Commandements: as originall ſinne is ſaid to be forbidden in all the Commandements, ſo are the thoughts taken order for in all.

Secondly, out of it are iſſues of life; thoughts and affections are the ſpring, ſpeeches and actions the ſtreame: as are our thoughts, ſo are our affections; for theſe are the bellows: ſo alſo our p ayers, ſo all, for they are in the ſoule as the ſpirits in the body, they run through all, move all, act all.

Thirdly, if you looke to God, our thoughts are that ſpot of ground, which he proclaimes himſelfe ſole Lord of, and makes it one of his greateſt titles, that he *knowes them*, and *judgeth them*. Kings attempt to rule your tongues, to bind your hands, and rule your actions; but God onely your thoughts. By them wee chiefly ſanctifie him in our hearts, by them we walk with God; and ſhall we not make conſcience of them?

Fourthly, if you looke to the worke and *power of grace*, wherein lies it, But in *bringing every thought into obedience*, 2 *Cor.*10.4. This is the glory of our religion above all other in the world: wherein lies the difficulty of it, the ſtrictneſſe of it, what makes it ſo hard a taske? but the obſerving and keeping the thoughts in bounds: wherein lies the difference between ſincere hearted Chriſtians and others? but the keeping of our thoughts, without which all Religion is but *bodily exerciſe*. Papiſts may mumble over their Prayers, hypocrites talke, but this is *godlineſſe*.

Fiftly,

Fiftly, if we looke to things we have a care of; if we have a care of ſpeeches, becauſe Chriſt *hath ſaid, We ſhall anſwer for every idle word*; why not alſo for the ſame reaſon, ſhould we have a care of thoughts? which are the *words of the mind*, only they want a ſhape, to be audible to others, which the tongue gives them, for which you muſt anſwer as well as for words, *Heb.* 4.12. 1 *Cor.* 4.5. If you be carefull what Companions you have, and whom you lodge in your houſes, and who lie in your boſoms, then much more of your thoughts which *lodge* in your hearts, which are not yours but Gods houſes; built for himſelfe, and for Chriſt and *his Word to dwell in*: ſeeing alſo the things you think of, have the moſt neare intimate fellowſhip and converſe with you. And therefore when you thinke of the Word, it is ſaid to *talke with you*, *Prov.* 6. If you be carefull of what you eate, becauſe ſuch blood you have, &c. then be carefull what you thinke, thoughts being *Pabulum animæ*, as *Tully* calls them. *Thy words did* [*I eate*] ſayes *Jeremiah*, ſpeaking of meditating on it.

Sixtly, if you looke to the iſſue of things: what ſhall be the ſubject of that great inqueſt at the Day of Judgement? the *thoughts and counſels*, 1 *Cor.* 4. 5. And after the Day of Judgement mens thoughts ſhall prove their greateſt executioners: what are the cords God laſhes you with to all eternity? your owne thoughts; *thoughts accuſing*, whereby you ſtudy over every ſinne; and every one will be as a dagger, *Iſay* 33.18. the *Hypocrites* torment, is to *meditate terrours*, to ſtudy Gods wrath, and the Saints bleſſednеſſe, and their owne ſinnes and miſery.

Remedies againſt vain Thoughts.

THE firſt is to get the heart furniſhed and enriched with good ſtock of ſanctified and heavenly knowledge in ſpirituall and heavenly truths: *For a good man* (ſaith CHRIST) *hath a good treaſure* in his *Heart*, *Matth.* 13. *ver.* 35. that is, he hath all graces, ſo many pretious truths which are as Gold in the Ore, which his thoughts, as the Mint, doth coine and beat out, and which words bring forth. *A good man, out of the good treaſure of his heart, brings forth good things.* If therefore there be not mines of pretious truths hid in the heart, no wonder if our thoughts coine nothing but droſſe, frothy vaine thoughts,

for better materials which ſhould feed the minde, are wanting. Therefore *Solomon* ſaith, *Wicked men forge*, mint, or hammer *wickedneſſe*, *Prov.* 6. 14. ſo *Junius* reads it: or if men have ſtore of naturall knowledge, and want ſpirituall uſefull knowledge, to themſelves; although in company with others, they may bring forth good things in ſpeeches, yet when alone, their thoughts run not on them. For this take a place of Scripture, *Deut.* 6. 6, 7. which ſhewes, that laying up the Word in the heart, and being much converſant in it, and getting knowledge out of it, is an effectuall meanes to keep our thoughts well exerciſed when we are alone, for the end why thoſe words of the Law are commanded *to be laid up in the heart*, *ver.* 5. 6. is, as to teach them to others, ſo, to take up our thoughts when we are moſt retired, and alone, and when a man can doe nothing, but barely exerciſe his mind, in thinking; for when a man is a *riding*, or *walking*, or *lying downe*, and riſing up, (which are often and uſually our moſt retired times for thoughts, and are wholly ſpent in them, and many ride alone, and lie alone, &c.) yet then, ſaith he, thou ſhalt *talke of the Word:* which command he that is alone cannot doe, therefore the *talking* there meant is not onely λόγῳ προφορικῷ, *outward conference* with others (though intended as occaſion of talking with others is given) as to talke to thy bedfellow of it, and to thy companion: but ſuppoſe thou haſt none, then to *talke of it* to thy ſelf, for thoughts are λόγοι ἐνδιάθετοι, *talking of the mind*; and ſo comparing *Prov.* 6. 22. with this place (which will fitly interpret it) it appears; for *Solomon* exhorting to the ſame duty of *Binding the Word to the heart*, uſeth this motive, which is the fruit thereof, *That when thou awakeſt, it ſhall talke with thee*, that is, by thy thinking of it it will talk with thee when thou and it art alone: So as thou ſhalt not need a better companion, it will be putting in and ſuggeſting ſomething.

Secondly, endeavour to preſerve and keep up lively, holy, and ſpirituall affections in thy heart, and ſuffer them not to coole; *Fall not from thy firſt love*, nor feare, nor joy in God; or if thou haſt grown remiſſe, endeavour to recover thoſe affections againe. For ſuch as your affections are, ſuch neceſſarily muſt your thoughts be; and they encline the minde to thinke of ſuch or ſuch objects as will pleaſe them, rather than others; therefore

ſayes

ſayes *David, Pſal.* 119.97. *How doe I love thy Law! it is my meditation day and night.* It was his love to it made him thinke of it ſo frequently. So *Mal.* 3.16. *Thoſe that feared the Lord, and thought upon his Name*, are joyned: For what we feare we often thinke of, and alſo ſpeake of often; therefore it is added, *They ſpeake of one to another*; *feare* made them *thinke* much *of his name*, and thinking of it made *them ſpeake of it*: ſuch affection, ſuch thoughts, and ſuch ſpeeches, as they both are. And indeed thoughts and affections are *Sibi mutuo cauſæ*, the mutuall cauſes of each other: *Whilſt I muſed, the fire burned, Pſal.* 39. ſo that thoughts are the bellows that kindle and enflame affections: and then if they are enflamed, they cauſe thoughts to boile, therefore men newly converted to God, having new and ſtrong affections, can with more pleaſure thinke of God *than any*.

Thirdly, of all apprehenſions elſe, get thy heart poſſeſſed with deep, ſtrong, and powerfull apprehenſions and impreſſions of *Gods Holineſſe, Majeſty, Omnipreſence, and Omniſcience.* If any thoughts be of power to ſettle, fix, and draw in the minde of man, they are the *thoughts of him.* What is the reaſon that the Saints and Angels in Heaven have not a vaine thought to eternity, not a wry ſtroke, his preſence fixeth them, their eye is never off him? Take a wanton gariſh looſe ſpirit, let him be but in the preſence of a Superior whom he feares and reverenceth, and it conſolidates him. *Job* made therefore conſcience of his thoughts, that he durſt not looke awry, *Job* 31.1,2. becauſe God *ſees it*, ſaith he. This drew in and faſtned *Davids* thoughts, *Pſal.* 139. from the firſt to the twelfth, he manifeſts what continuall apprehenſions he had of Gods Greatneſſe, Majeſty, and Omnipreſence, and what effect had this? *When I awake I am even before thee, ver.* 17. Look what objects they are, have moſt ſtrong and deep impreſſions in the minde, of thoſe when a man awaketh he thinks of firſt. Now ſuch ſtrong impreſſions had *Davids* thoughts of God, that ſtill when he awaked, he was with him, and therefore we finde it by experience to be a meanes to avoid diſtractions in prayers, to enlarge a mans thoughts in his preparations before, or at the beginning with a conſideration of Gods attributes and relations to us: and it will and doth make us ſerious.

Fourthly, eſpecially doe this when thou awakeſt, as *David* did there, *When I awake* I am ſtill with thee: to prevent wind which ariſeth from emptineſſe, men uſe to take a good draught in the morning, which the ſtomack feeds; ſo to prevent thoſe vaine, windy, frothy thoughts the heart naturally ingenders, and which ariſe from emptineſſe; firſt fill thy heart with the thoughts of God; *Goe downe into his Wine-cellar:* obſerve it when you will, when you firſt open your eyes there ſtand many ſuitors attending on you, to ſpeake with your thoughts, even as Cliants at Lawyers dores, many vanities and buſineſſes; but ſpeake thou with God firſt, he will ſay ſomething to thy heart, will ſettle it for all day: and this doe before the crowd of buſineſſes come in upon thee. Of ſome Heathens it is ſaid that they worſhip *that* as their *God*, for all day, which they firſt ſee in the morning; ſo it is with the Idols of mens hearts.

Fiftly, have a watchfull eye, and obſerve thy heart all day, though they crowd in, yet obſerve them, let them know that they paſſe not unſeen; if a man would pray aright, he muſt watch alſo, who comes in and who goes out: where ſtrict watch and ward is kept, and Magiſtrates obſervant, the Marſhall and Conſtable diligent to examine vagrant perſons, you ſhall have few there; that ſuch ſwarms of vagrant thoughts make their rendevous, and paſſe, is becauſe there is not ſtrict watch kept.

This is in a manner all thou canſt doe, for they will paſſe however, but yet complaine thou of them, whip them, and give them their Paſſe.

Sixtly, pleaſe not thy fancie too much with vanities and curious ſights, this engenders vaine thoughts; therefore *Job* ſayes, *Chap.*31.*ver.*1. *That he made a covenant with his eyes, leſt he ſhould thinke of a Maid, Prov.*4.25. *Let thine eyes look right on.*

Seventhly, be diligent in thy calling; and *what thine hand findes to doe, doe it with all thy might*, as it is, *Eccleſiaſtes* 9.10. that is, putting to all the intention and ſtrength of the minde that may be in it. Let all the ſtreame run to ruine about thy Mill; the keeping thy thoughts to that channell, keeps them from overflowing into vanity and folly, 2 *Theſ.* 3. 11. *Thoſe that labour not are buſibodies.* And 1 *Tim.*5.13. *Idle, wandring,* περίεργοι, they are not onely called ἀργοὶ, *Idle* onely, becauſe not buſie about what they

they ſhould, but περίεργοι, as intent on things they ſhould not; they goe from houſe to houſe: ſo their bodies doe, becauſe their minds doe wander, having no center. When *David* walked alone, what extravagancie did his ſpirit run into? let the ground lie fallow, and what weeds will there ſoone grow in it? God hath appointed us our callings to entertaine our thoughts, and to find them work, and to hold them doing in the *interims*, between the duties of his worſhip, becauſe the ſpirit and thoughts of men are reſtleſſe, and will be buſied ſome way; as therefore Kings keep thoſe men that have active ſpirits in continuall imployment, leſt their heads ſhould be working and plotting amiſſe: ſo did God appoint even in Paradiſe the active ſpirit of man, a calling to keep him doing. God hereby hedgeth in mans thoughts, and ſets them to goe in a narrow lane, knowing that if they are unconfined and left at liberty, they would like wild *Aſſes ſnuffe up the winde*, as *Jeremy* ſpeaks, *Jer.* 2. 24. onely take heed of encumbring thy minde with too much buſineſſe, more than thou canſt graſp. It made *Martha* forget that *one thing neceſſary*, being *cumbred with many things*, *Luke* 10. 4. this breeds cares, μέριμναι, which diſtracts the mind (ſo the word ſignifies ἀπὸ τῆ μερίζειν) as *dividing it*, and ſo cauſe wandring thoughts nothing more, ſo that the minde is not it ſelfe. For this weakens it, enervates it, and this being vanity, *Exod.* 18. 18. ſaid *Jethro* to *Moſes*, when encombred with buſineſſe, *Thou wilt fade away as a leafe*, out of which the moiſture is dryed up, even that juyce which ſhould be left for good duties will be exhauſted: as dreams come through multitude of buſineſſe, *Eccleſ.* 5. 3. ſo doe a multitude of thoughts from a cumber of buſineſſe.

Eighthly, in thy calling, and all thy wayes, for the ſucceſſe and thy wayes therein, *Commit thy Wayes to God*, Prov. 16. 3. *Commit thy Way unto the Lord, and thy thoughts ſhall be eſtabliſhed, or ordered*: that is, kept from that confuſion and diſorder, and thoſe ſwarmes of cares, which others are annoyed with: and thereby thy aimes may be as well accompliſhed: a few thoughts of faith would ſave us many thoughts of cares and feares, in the buſineſſes we go about; which prove therefore *vaine*, becauſe they forward not at all the buſineſſe we intend. When ſuch waves toſſe the heart and turmoile it, and the winds of paſſions are up, if a few thoughts of faith come into the heart, they calme all preſently.

FINIS.